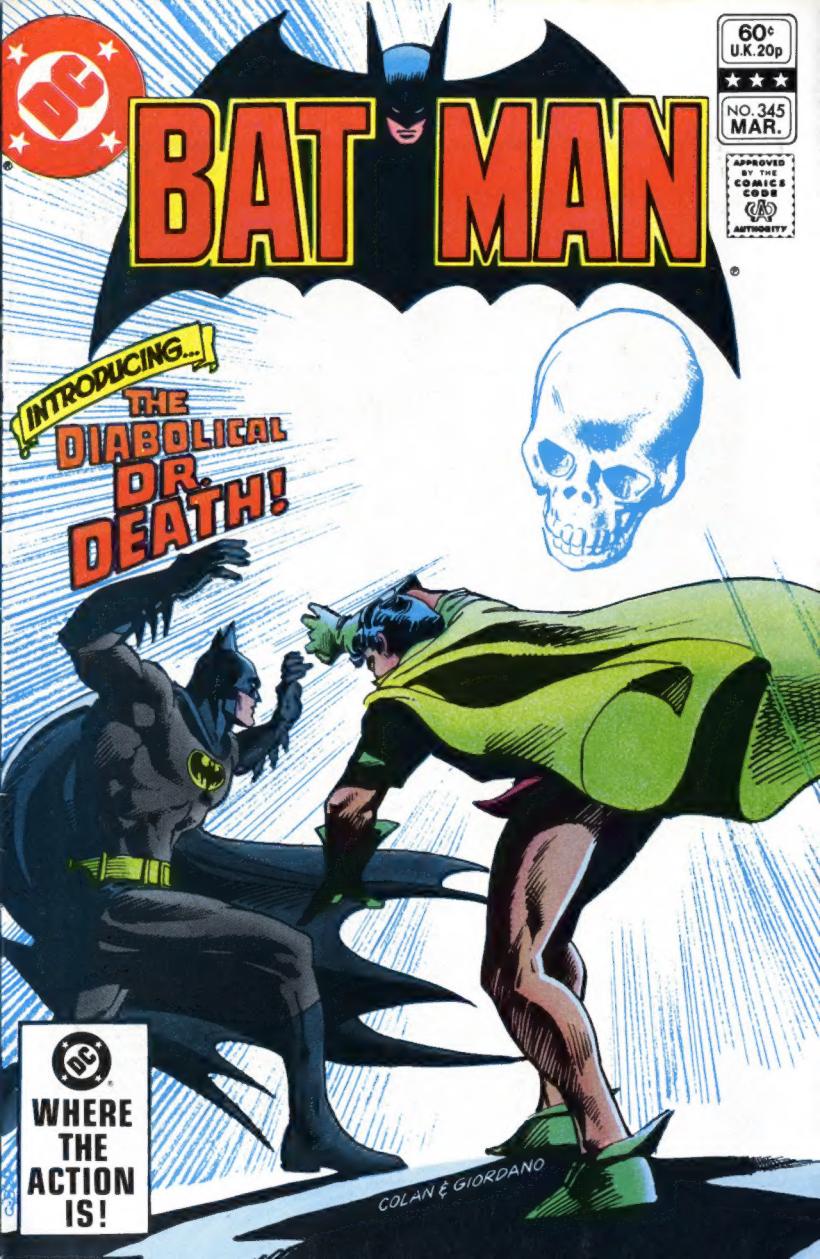
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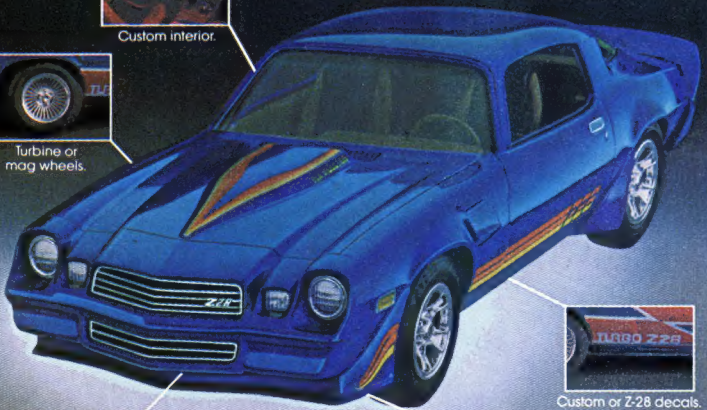
BAT MAN
INTRODUCING...
THE DIABOLICAL DR. DEATH!
WHERE THE ACTION IS!
COLAN & GIORDANO

WITH MPC, OPTIONS ARE STANDARD EQUIPMENT.

Custom interior.

Turbine or mag wheels.



Custom or Z-28 decals.

Single quad or turbocharged engine.

Wheel well flares.

MPC model cars come with more customizing parts and decals than just about any other car kit. This Turbo Z-28 for example comes with all the things you see here, so you can give it a stock or full street machine look . . . or anything in between. And every 1/25th scale MPC car kit comes with a different set of custom options that lets you create a model car like no one else's.

mpc

The best models come from the best kits.

Available wherever model kits are sold. Paint and cement not included.

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FOOTSTEPS: A CREAKING DOOR; A SCUFFLE AND MUTTERED CURSES...
INSIDE.
THE DOCTOR WANTS TO SEE YOU.
DON'T PUSH. I'VE GOT LEGS, I CAN WALK.
THAT WILL BE ALL, TOGO.
PLEASE WAIT OUTSIDE.
WHO'S THAT? DOC, IZZIT YOU? CAN'T SEE, SO DARK!
YOU WANT LIGHT, MR. KESWICK?
VERY WELL--
LET THERE BE LIGHT!
OWWW! YOU HAFTA MAKE IT SO BRIGHT?
WHAT'S THE IDEA, ANYWAY? WHY'D YOU WANNA SEE ME?
THE "IDEA," MR. KESWICK, IS THAT YOU HAVE BETRAYED ME.
MY AGENTS IN THE UNDERWORLD INFORM ME THAT YOU'VE APPROACHED THE POLICE--
VERY STUPID.
CLICK
-- OFFERED TO SELL THEM DETAILS OF MY PLANNED OPERATION.
THAT WAS STUPID, KESWICK.
NOT THE "DUST," DOC!
PLEASE NOT THE DUST!
AAAHHHHHHH

BATMAN, (USPS 048-340), Vol. 43, No. 345, March, 1982. Published monthly by DC COMICS INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and Additional Mailing Offices. Copyright © 1981 by DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

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SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: DC COMICS INC., P.O. Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024. Annual subscription rate $7.20. Outside U.S.A. $8.20.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DC COMICS INC., P.O. Box 1308-F, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024.

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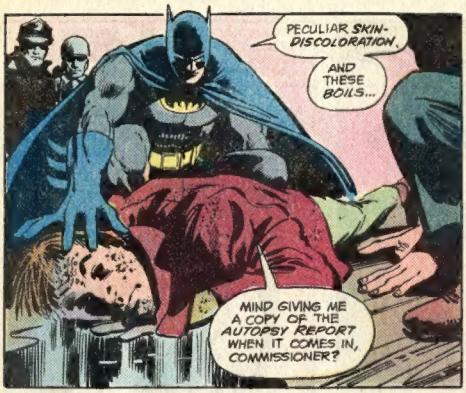
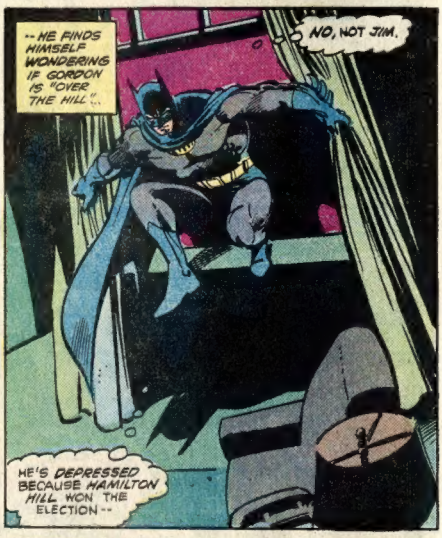
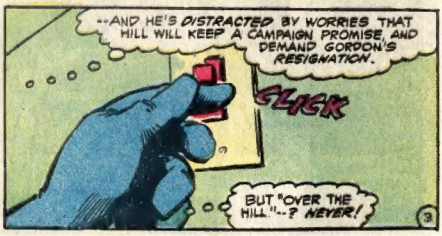
MOONLIGHT AND MURDER SEEM TO GO TOGETHER, AT LEAST HERE IN GOTHAM CITY.
BEGINNING A TWO PART TALE OF TERROR IN THE LEGEND OF THE...
BATMAN
"CALLING DOCTOR DEATH"
AN HOUR AFTER SUNSET, THE CAPTAIN OF A GARBAGE SCOW REPORTED SEEING A BODY FLOATING IN GOTHAM RIVER.
POLICE FROGMEN WERE CALLED TO THE SCENE... COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON WAS NOTIFIED... AND NOW, UNDER A PALE WINTER'S MOON, A GRIZZLY RECOVERY IS COMPLETED...
I WAS PASSING BY WHEN I SAW YOUR LIGHTS, COMMISSIONER.
WHAT'S THE STORY HERE?
A WOULD-BE STOOL PIGEON NAME KESWICK.
HE WANTED TO SELL US SOME INFORMATION-- BUT SOMEONE MADE HIM A BETTER OFFER.
GERRY CONWAY WRITER
GENE COLAN + KLAUS JANSON ARTISTS
BEN ODA – ADRIENNE ROY LETTERER COLORIST
DICK GIORDANO EDITOR

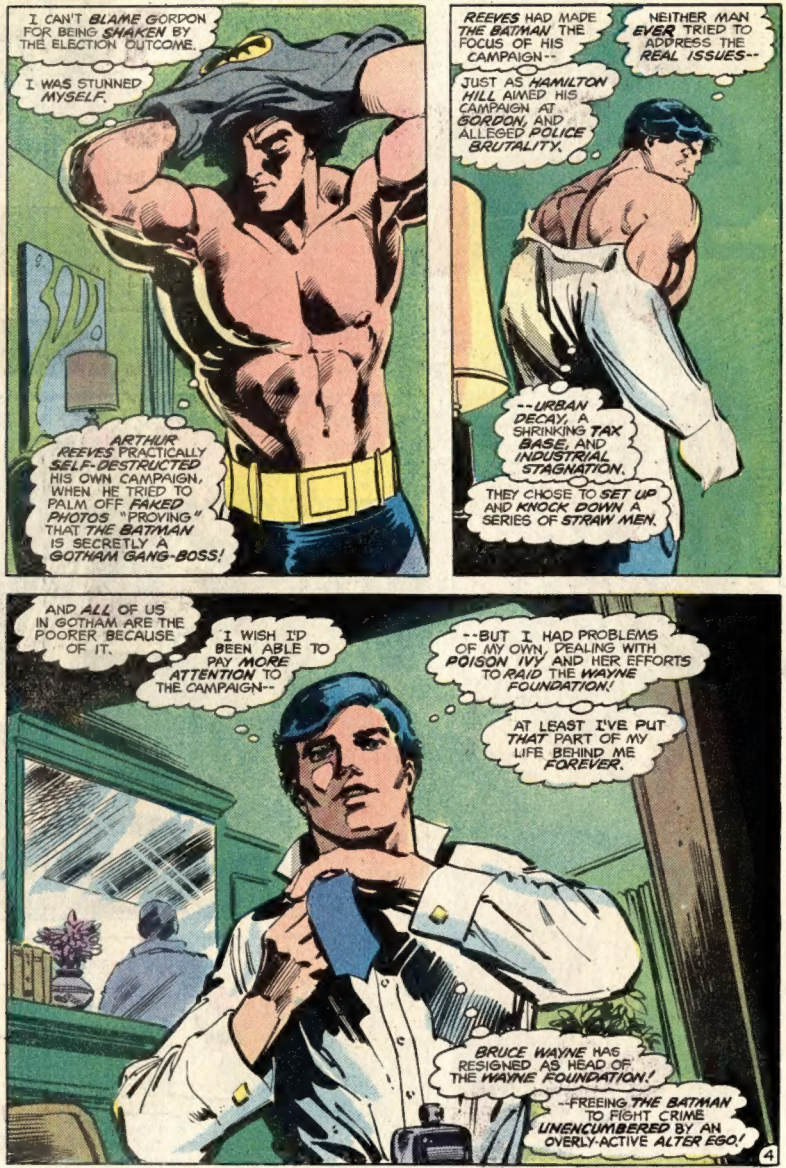

PECULIAR SKIN-DISCOLORATION.
AND THESE BOILS...
MIND GIVING ME A COPY OF THE AUTOPSY REPORT WHEN IT COMES IN, COMMISSIONER?

HM? WHAT...? OH YES, THE AUTOPSY, OF COURSE.
I'LL GIVE YOU A CALL ON THE HOTLINE... YES, THE HOTLINE...
THE BATMAN DOESN'T COMMENT ON HIS FRIEND'S DISTRACTION.
BUT HE NOTES IT...

...AND AS HE CONTINUES ON HIS INTERRUPTED JOURNEY SOUTH ALONG GOTHAM'S EAST SIDE, HE PONDERS THE CHANGE THAT HAS COME OVER JAMES GORDON SINCE LAST MONTH'S MAYORAL ELECTION.*
ARRIVING AT HIS DESTINATION, AN APARTMENT BUILDING IN GOTHAM'S WELL-NAMED "GOLD COAST" AREA--
*SEE LAST MONTH'S BATMAN AND DETECTIVE. --DICK.


--HE FINDS HIMSELF WONDERING IF GORDON IS "OVER THE HILL".
NO, NOT JIM.
HE'S DEPRESSED BECAUSE HAMILTON HILL WON THE ELECTION--


--AND HE'S DISTRACTED BY WORRIES THAT HILL WILL KEEP A CAMPAIGN PROMISE, AND DEMAND GORDON'S RESIGNATION.
CLICK
BUT "OVER THE HILL"--? NEVER!


I CAN'T BLAME GORDON FOR BEING SHAKEN BY THE ELECTION OUTCOME.
I WAS STUNNED MYSELF.
ARTHUR REEVES PRACTICALLY SELF-DESTRUCTED HIS OWN CAMPAIGN, WHEN HE TRIED TO PALM OFF FAKED PHOTOS "PROVING" THAT THE BATMAN IS SECRETLY A GOTHAM GANG-BOSS!
REEVES HAD MADE THE BATMAN THE FOCUS OF HIS CAMPAIGN--
JUST AS HAMILTON HILL AIMED HIS CAMPAIGN AT GORDON, AND ALLEGED POLICE BRUTALITY.
NEITHER MAN EVER TRIED TO ADDRESS THE REAL ISSUES--
--URBAN DECAY, A SHRINKING TAX BASE, AND INDUSTRIAL STAGNATION.
THEY CHOSE TO SET UP AND KNOCK DOWN A SERIES OF STRAW MEN.
AND ALL OF US IN GOTHAM ARE THE POORER BECAUSE OF IT.
I WISH I'D BEEN ABLE TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE CAMPAIGN--
--BUT I HAD PROBLEMS OF MY OWN, DEALING WITH POISON IVY AND HER EFFORTS TO RAID THE WAYNE FOUNDATION!
AT LEAST I'VE PUT THAT PART OF MY LIFE BEHIND ME FOREVER.
BRUCE WAYNE HAS RESIGNED AS HEAD OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION!
--FREEING THE BATMAN TO FIGHT CRIME UNENCUMBERED BY AN OVERLY-ACTIVE ALTER EGO!
4
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

Play the Bubble Yum® Sweepstakes

...and win exciting electronic and photographic prizes.

First, draw the path through the maze and then mail it in with your sweepstakes coupon.

Start

With Bubble Yum, you can blow amazing bubbles even bigger than this maze.

If you don't know where to turn, turn to Bubble Yum's five great flavors: Regular, Tropical Punch, Spearmint, Wild Cherry, and Grape.

Finish

Don't give up—Bubble Yum's long-lasting taste doesn't. And it's got a smooth, soft chew too!

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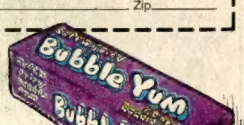


Mail entries to:
Bubble Yum Sweepstakes
P.O. Box 573
Lowell, IN 46356

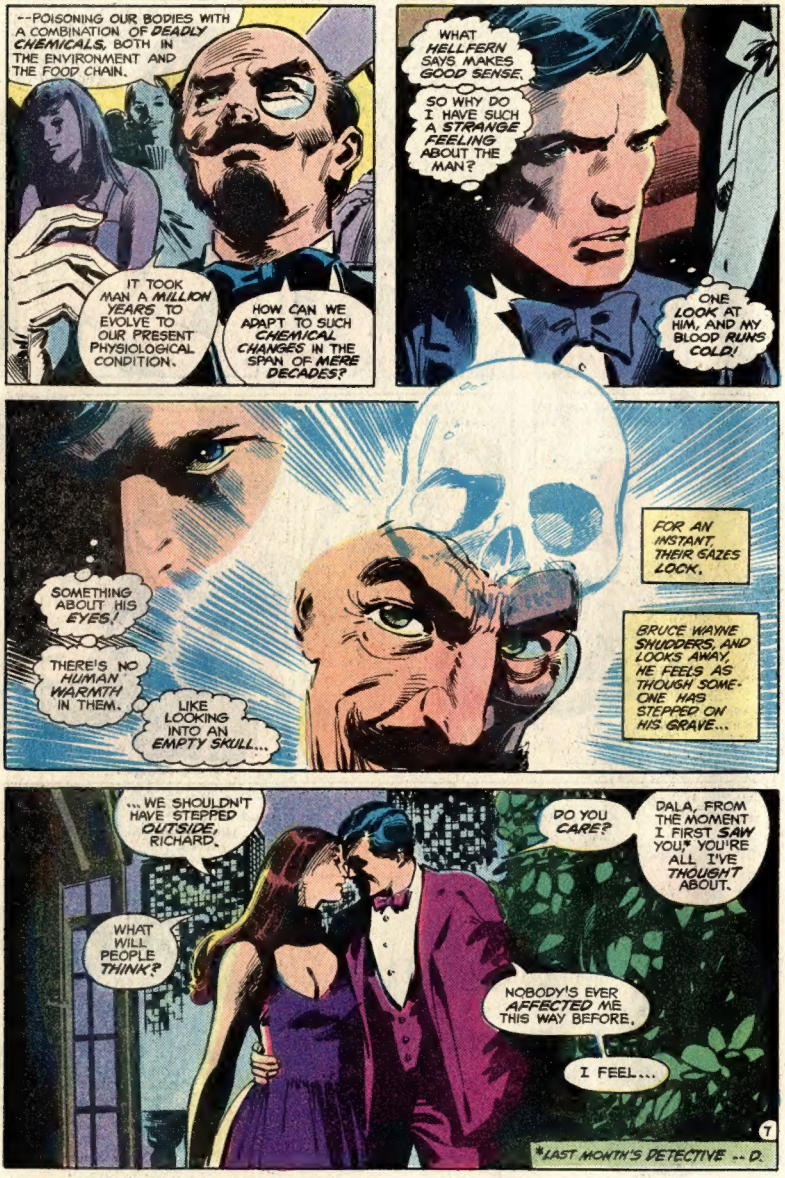
Congratulations! You've made it. Now look at the great prizes you can win:

- ★ First prize includes: a Panasonic Reggie Vision with video cassette recorder and sound camera, Canon AE1 35mm camera, and two Polaroid SX70 Auto Focus II cameras. (2 Winners)
- ★ Second prize is a Mattel Intellivision with 4 cassettes. (10 Winners)
- ★ And, third prize is a set of 4 Mattel hand-held computer games. (100 Winners)

1. Correctly completing the maze is not necessary for entry.
2. No purchase necessary. To enter, print your name, address and zip code on the official entry blank or on a plain 3x5 piece of paper. Each entry must include two (2) outside wrappers from "Bubble Yum bubble gum" or print the words "Bubble Yum bubble gum" on a 3x5 piece of paper.
3. Enter as often as you like, but each entry must be mailed separately. Entries must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1981 and received by January 15, 1982.
4. Winners will be determined in a random drawing conducted by Ventura Associates, an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. Winners will be notified by mail. All prizes will be awarded. Odds of winning are dependent upon the number of entries received.
5. No duplicate prizes to a family and no substitutions. Winners may be required to sign a statement of eligibility and winners' names and likenesses may be used for promotion purposes. Liability for taxes is the sole responsibility of the prize winners.
6. Sweepstakes open to U.S. residents, except where prohibited by law. Not open to employees and their families of Life Savers, Inc., their affiliates, advertising, and judging agencies.
7. For a complete list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Bubble Yum Family Fun 'n' Games Winners List, P.O. Box 566 WL, Lowell, IN 46356

EXIT, BRUCE WAYNE, BUSINESSMAN... ENTER, BRUCE WAYNE, PLAYBOY!
MY CHANGE OF CHARACTER IS ALREADY PAYING DIVIDENDS:
THIS PARTY TONIGHT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE!
IF THIS WERE A WAYNE FOUNDATION BOARD MEETING, I WOULD HAVE BEEN MISSED WHEN I SLIPPED OUT AS THE BATMAN.
BUT THESE "BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE" ARE ONLY AWARE OF THEMSELVES--
--AND EVEN BRUCE WAYNE IS JUST ANOTHER FACE IN THEIR CROWD.
BRUCIE! JUST THE MAN I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!
LITTLE CINDY HAS HAD TOO MUCH PARTY. WILL YOU DRIVE LITTLE CINDY HOME, BRUCIE-SWEET?
NOT UNLESS HE CAN DRIVE WITH A BROKEN ARM, CINDY-SWEET...
...'BRUCIE' IS WITH ME.
TA-TA, CINDY-SWEET. FIND ANOTHER CHAUFFEUR.
THIS ONE IS TAKEN.
HELLO, VICKI. HAVING FUN?
I'M IN NO MOOD FOR BAD JOKES, BRUCE.
NEXT TIME YOU DRAG ME TO ONE OF THESE WAKES, PLEASE DON'T WANDER OFF! I'M LIABLE TO DO A BRADY OUT OF SHEER BOREDOM.
SORRY, MS. VALE. AFTER YOUR YEARS IN PARIS--
--I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D ENJOY AN OLD-FASHIONED GOTHAM SOCIETY SOURIEE.
PUH-LEASE. BE SERIOUS.
SAY, HERE'S MY WARD, DICK GRAYSON...
5

VICKI, YOU REMEMBER DICK, LAST TIME YOU SAW EACH OTHER, HE WAS IN GRADE SCHOOL--NOW HE'S A COLLEGE MAN.
MY TURN FOR INTRODUCTIONS, VICKI.
MEET DALA. WE'RE AT GOTHAM UNIVERSITY TOGETHER.
DICK, VICKI VALE... PHOTO EDITOR FOR PICTURE NEWS MAGAZINE.
CHARMED.
MR. WAYNE...RICHARD HAS TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU, I FEEL WE ARE ALREADY FRIENDS.
YUK.
WELL, THE LADY'S BEAUTIFUL, I'LL SAY THAT FOR HER.
CLICK
MIGHT BE WORTH A FEW INCHES ON THE SOCIETY PAGE.
NICE MEETING YOU, DALA.
SEE YOU BACK AT THE PENTHOUSE, DICK.
SURE, BRUCE--BUT DON'T WAIT UP.
G'NIGHT, MS. VALE.
MAYBE IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS, BRUCE--
--BUT ISN'T SHE A LITTLE, AH, OLD FOR DICK?
YOU'RE RIGHT, VICKI.
IT'S NONE OF OUR BUSINESS.
WHO'S THE GENTLEMAN WITH THE WHISKERS WHO'S WOWING THE LADIES?
JEALOUS?
HIS NAME'S DR. KARL HELLFERN. I GATHER HE'S BIG WITH THE SOCIETY SET--A HIGH-PRICED DR. FEELGOOD.
6


--POISONING OUR BODIES WITH A COMBINATION OF DEADLY CHEMICALS, BOTH IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE FOOD CHAIN.
IT TOOK MAN A MILLION YEARS TO EVOLVE TO OUR PRESENT PHYSIOLOGICAL CONDITION.
HOW CAN WE ADAPT TO SUCH CHEMICAL CHANGES IN THE SPAN OF MERE DECADES?
WHAT HELLFERN SAYS MAKES GOOD SENSE.
SO WHY DO I HAVE SUCH A STRANGE FEELING ABOUT THE MAN?
ONE LOOK AT HIM, AND MY BLOOD RUNS COLD!
SOMETHING ABOUT HIS EYES!
THERE'S NO HUMAN WARMTH IN THEM.
LIKE LOOKING INTO AN EMPTY SKULL...
FOR AN INSTANT, THEIR GAZES LOCK.
BRUCE WAYNE SHUDDERS, AND LOOKS AWAY. HE FEELS AS THOUGH SOMEONE HAS STEPPED ON HIS GRAVE...
...WE SHOULDN'T HAVE STEPPED OUTSIDE, RICHARD.
WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK?
DO YOU CARE?
DALA, FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST SAW YOU* YOU'RE ALL I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT.
NOBODY'S EVER AFFECTED ME THIS WAY BEFORE.
I FEEL...
*LAST MONTH'S DETECTIVE -- D.

...HEY!
WHAT'S THIS STUFF ON MY HAND?
LOOKS LIKE DUST--
A SILVERY-WHITE D-DA-DAHUS--
AAHH
CHOOO
RICHARD, YOU'RE NOT COMING DOWN WITH A COLD--?
IT'S NOT A COLD, IT'S THIS DUST!
LOOK! THE SKY'S FULL OF IT... DRIFTING DOWN LIKE ASH FROM A SMOKE-STACK!
PERHAPS IT'S JUST THAT.
FACTORY ASH.
SINCE WHEN DOES ASH GLOW?
DALA, I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...
AND, AS IF TO REINFORCE DICK GRAYSON'S FEARS, A SHADOW FLITS ACROSS THE MOON, WITH A SOUND LIKE BEATING WINGS...
...AND WHERE IT PASSES, A FINE GLOWING DUST RAINS DOWN UPON THE SLEEPING CITY...

...A REAL BAD FEELING!
THE MOON IS STILL HIGH, AN HOUR LATER, WHEN A SECRET ELEVATOR WHISPERS DOWNWARD THROUGH THE DARKENED WAYNE BUILDING--
--FROM THE PENTHOUSE OF BRUCE WAYNE, HIGH ABOVE--
--TO THE BATCAVE OF WAYNE'S ALTER-EGO, FAR BELOW.
ALFRED TOLD ME YOU WERE DOWN HERE, DICK.
I ADMIT I'M SURPRISED.
I THOUGHT YOU HAD OTHER PLANS.
SHALL I BREW A FRESH POT OF EARL GREY, SIR?
NO TEA FOR ME, ALFRED-- I'M RUNNING ON SHEER ADRENALINE.
YOU BET I HAD OTHER PLANS, BRUCE, BUT SOMETHING CAME UP...
...OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY, SOMETHING CAME DOWN!
TALK WHILE I CHANGE.
9

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

ADVERTISEMENT

AQUAMAN AND PIRATES' GOLD
KABAROOM
AN UNDERSEA EXPLOSION SHAKES THE CONTINENT OF ATLANTIS...
GREAT GUPPIES!
THERE'S THE CAUSE, AQUALAD--THOSE SURFACE MEN PLANTING EXPLOSIVES!
YOU'VE GOT TO STOP! YOUR BLASTS WILL SHAKE ATLANTIS TO PIECES!
SORRY, AQUAMAN --OUR MAP SAYS THERE'S PIRATES' GOLD--SUNKEN TREASURE--DOWN HERE!
NOTHING YOU SAY CAN STOP US!
WHAT CAN WE DO, AQUAMAN?
THEY WANT GOLD--AND I KNOW JUST WHAT TO GIVE THEM!
SHORTLY...
LOOK! IT'S A TREASURE CHEST!
AND SOON, AT SEA LEVEL..
WOW! THIS IS A REAL TREASURE!
I'LL SAY! HOSTESS® TWINKIES® CAKES!
WHO NEEDS GOLD DOUBLOONS WHEN WE CAN HAVE THESE DELICIOUS GOLDEN SPONGE CAKES?
LET'S HEAD BACK TO LAND AND SEARCH FOR MORE TREASURE -- TWINKIES CAKES ON OUR GROCER'S SHELF!
Twinkies
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS® TWINKIES® CAKES

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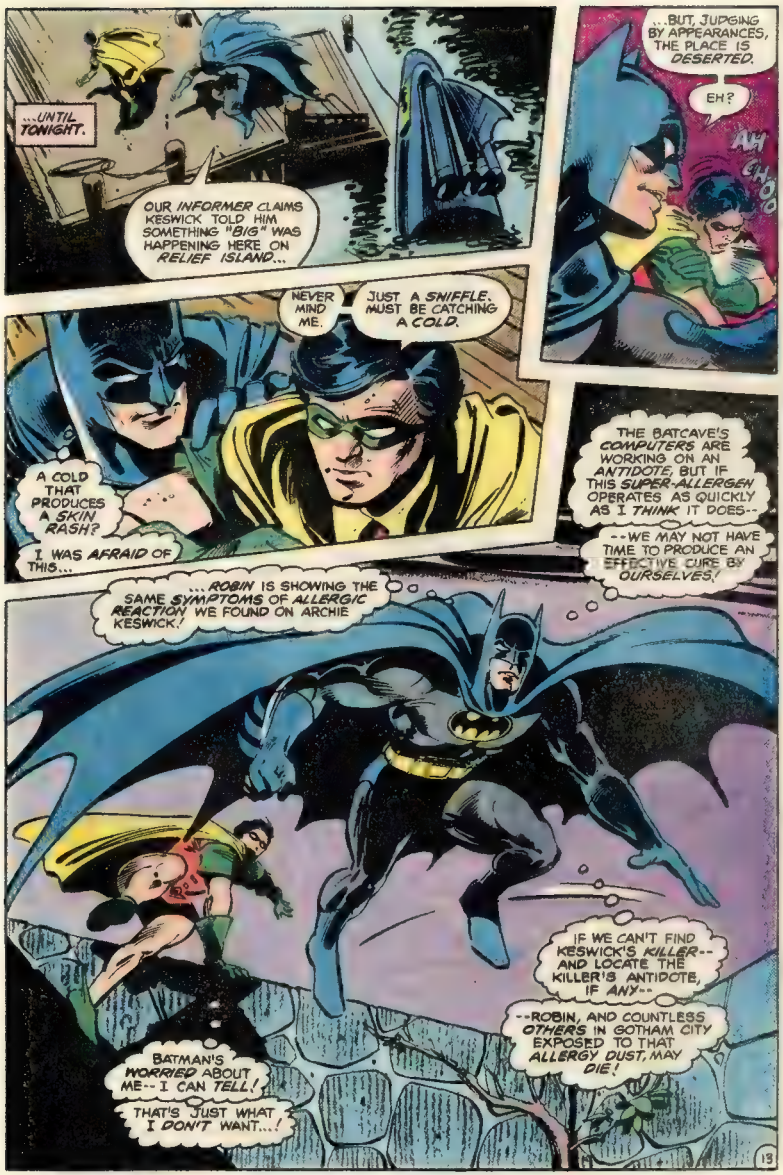
HE DOES...
...SO AFTER LEAVING DALA AT THE UNIVERSITY DORM, I HUSTLED BACK HERE, AND TOOK A SCRAPING OF THAT DUST FROM MY SKIN.
THIS IS IT.
ARE YOU GOING TO RUN IT THROUGH THE CHEMICAL ANALYSIS COMPUTER?
I'M SURE NOT GOING TO GIVE IT TO ALFRED FOR HIS TEA POT!
IF THIS IS A FACTORY ASH--ILLEGALLY DUMPED AT NIGHT--
--OUR COMPUTER SHOULD IDENTIFY IT BY CHEMICAL TYPING.
SUPER-ALLERGEN
...DEADLY
THEN WE CAN NAIL THE LOUSY POLLUTERS WHO--
HUH?
SHOCK TURNS ROBIN'S FACE THE COLOR OF OLD PASTE.
HE'S JUST READ HIS DEATH SENTENCE.
ELSEWHERE IN GOTHAM CITY TONIGHT, ANOTHER MAN TURNS WHITE WITH SHOCK AS...
YOU HEARD ME, GORDON.
THIS MORNING I WAS SWORN IN AS MAYOR OF GOTHAM CITY... AND AS MY FIRST OFFICIAL ACT--
--I'M DEMANDING YOUR RESIGNATION!
YOU KNOW, HILL, I WONDERED HOW I'D FEEL WHEN THIS MOMENT CAME...
...AND HOW I FEEL IS ANGRY!
YOU USED ME AS A PUNCHING BAG DURING YOUR CAMPAIGN, BUT THAT WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH!
NOW THAT YOU'VE WON--YOU WON'T BE SATISFIED TILL YOU DESTROY BOTH ME--AND THE DEPARTMENT!

COMMISSIONER, YOU'RE A FOSSILIZED OLD FOOL.
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
THAT'S HOW LONG YOU HAVE, BEFORE I DEMAND YOUR IMPEACHMENT.
THE NERVE OF THE MAN, STALKING OUT BEFORE I'D FINISHED!
THEN WE'LL SEE IF THE VOTERS AGREE WITH MY--
WE'LL BE WELL RID OF--EH?
SLAM
BEEP BEEP
MY BEEPER... THE ONE HE GAVE ME.
I WONDER WHAT HE WANTS...?
BEEP
(MORE NEXT ISSUE!)
A SHORT TIME LATER, OUTSIDE ONE OF GOTHAM'S GLOOMIER PUBLIC BUILDINGS...
MORGUE
...CALLED YOU AS SOON AS I RECEIVED THE REPORT.
FANTASTIC AS IT SEEMS... ARCHIE KESWIK DIED OF AN EXTREME ALLERGIC REACTION...
...TO SOME CHEMICAL ....OR CHEMICALS... UNKNOWN.
IT DOESN'T SEEM AS FANTASTIC NOW AS IT WOULD HAVE ONLY AN HOUR AGO....!
WE'LL BE IN TOUCH!
CUT TO:
BAR
CRASH
WE'RE NOT PLAYING AROUND, STOOLIE.
MAYBE YOU'VE ALREADY FIGURED THAT OUT.

YOU THREW ME THROUGH A WINDOW...
I COULDA BEEN KILLER...
CONSIDER IT A WARNING, SCUM.
NEXT TIME I COME ASKING FOR INFORMATION--
--DON'T PULL A GUN.
OR, INSTEAD OF A WINDOW-- I MIGHT TOSS YOU THROUGH A WALL.
I WON'T ASK YOU A THIRD TIME:
WHO KILLED ARCHIE KESWICK--AND WHERE DO I FIND HIM?
FALSE DAWN GENTLES THE EASTERN HORIZON FORTY MINUTES LATER, AS A SLEEK BLACK RACING HULL CUTS A FOAMY PATH ACROSS GOTHAM RIVER...
DESTINATION: RELIEF ISLAND, BUILT IN THE 1930s TO HOUSE GOTHAM'S SICK AND DESTITUTE, REPLACED IN THE 1960s BY A STATE-WIDE SOCIAL AID BUREAUCRACY... ABANDONED AND FORGOTTEN FOR FIFTEEN YEARS...

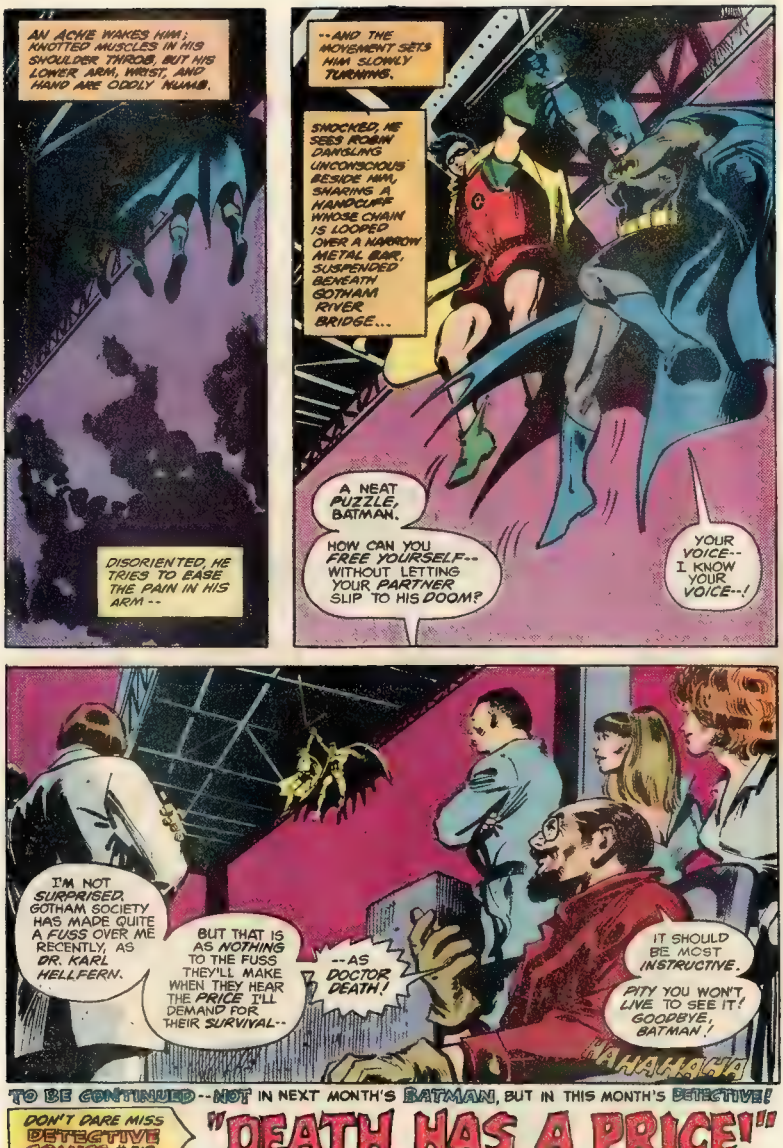

...UNTIL TONIGHT.
OUR INFORMER CLAIMS KESWICK TOLD HIM SOMETHING "BIG" WAS HAPPENING HERE ON RELIEF ISLAND...
...BUT, JUDGING BY APPEARANCES, THE PLACE IS DESERTED.
EH?
AH CHOO
NEVER MIND ME.
JUST A SNIFFLE. MUST BE CATCHING A COLD.
A COLD THAT PRODUCES A SKIN RASH?
I WAS AFRAID OF THIS...
THE BATCAVE'S COMPUTERS ARE WORKING ON AN ANTIDOTE, BUT IF THIS SUPER-ALLERGEN OPERATES AS QUICKLY AS I THINK IT DOES--
--WE MAY NOT HAVE TIME TO PRODUCE AN EFFECTIVE CURE BY OURSELVES!
...ROBIN IS SHOWING THE SAME SYMPTOMS OF ALLERGIC REACTION KESWICK WE FOUND ON ARCHIE!
IF WE CAN'T FIND KESWICK'S KILLER-- AND LOCATE THE KILLER'S ANTIDOTE, IF ANY--
--ROBIN, AND COUNTLESS OTHERS IN GOTHAM CITY EXPOSED TO THAT ALLERGY DUST, MAY DIE!
BATMAN'S WORRIED ABOUT ME-- I CAN TELL!
THAT'S JUST WHAT I DON'T WANT...!

I DIDN'T RETURN HOME-- JUST TO BECOME A SIDEKICK--A DRAG ON HIS ATTENTION-- SOMEONE TO WORRY ABOUT!
I WANT TO BE AN EQUAL PARTNER.
JUST WISH... I DIDN'T FEEL SO FEVERED...!
NOTHING.
NOTHING BUT ABANDONED HOSPITAL BUILDINGS AND RUBBLE.
WE MIGHT AS WELL HEAD BACK AND TRY--
FWHOOM!
BATMAN, MY EYES--!
ACTINIC LIGHT!
DON'T LOOK AT IT, ROBIN! BLUE-WHITE LIGHT-- HEAVY IN ULTRA-VIOLET RADIATION!
YOU'LL BE BLINDED-- PERMANENTLY!
SHADOWS MOVING TOWARD US-- OUT OF THE GLARE!
BATMAN, LOOK OUT!

UNNH!
I CAN BARELY SEE-- BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE THERE ARE THREE OF THEM!
THEY MUST BE WEARING POLARIZING CONTACTS ON THEIR EYES--
--AND THAT GIVES THEM THE ADVANTAGE!
GUESS WE READ THE SIGNS WRONG, BATMAN!
WE WERE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE--
--AND WE'VE FOUND SOME, IN SPADES!
ROBIN'S PUTTING ON A BRAVE FRONT--
--BUT IN HIS WEAKENED STATE, HE CAN'T HOLD OUT FOR LONG!
WE HAVE TO FINISH THIS QUICKLY--!
--DESPITE THE ODDS AGAINST US!

WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?
WE WORK FOR DOC DEATH!
NOW THERE'S A CORNY NAME.
I HOPE HE TAKES BLUE CROSS--
--'CAUSE YOU DUMMIES ARE GOING TO NEED IT!
STOP FOOLING AROUND, FLOYD!
I CAN'T GET A CLEAR SHOT!
YOU WANT A CLEAR SHOT? HAVE ONE ON ME!
NO GOOD-- THAT KICK DIDN'T CONNECT THE WAY I WANTED IT TO!
I'M LOSING IT-- CAN'T KEEP MY BALANCE--FEEL SO BLASTED WEAK!
YOUR FRIEND IS STUMBLING!
FIRST HE WILL FALL--
KWHAM!
--THEN TOGO WILL FINISH YOU!
16

UNNHHH!
HOW?
BY FRIGHTENING ME TO DEATH?
BATMAN! THEY'RE GRABBING ME FROM BEHIND! I CAN'T--
WHAMMO!
ONE KNOCKOUT DROP--
--COURTESY OF THE DOCTOR!
ROBIN--
HE HEARS THE CLATTER OF HANDS SHIFTING RUBBLE BESIDE HIM.
GLIMPSING MOVEMENT, HE WHIRLS ABOUT--
--AND GOES DOWN--


AN ACHE WAKES HIM; KNOTTED MUSCLES IN HIS SHOULDER THROB, BUT HIS LOWER ARM, WRIST, AND HAND ARE ODDLY NUMB.
DISORIENTED, HE TRIES TO EASE THE PAIN IN HIS ARM --
--AND THE MOVEMENT SETS HIM SLOWLY TURNING.
SHOCKED, HE SEES ROBIN DANGLING UNCONSCIOUS BESIDE HIM, SHARING A HANDCUFF WHOSE CHAIN IS LOOPED OVER A NARROW METAL BAR, SUSPENDED BENEATH GOTHAM RIVER BRIDGE...
A NEAT PUZZLE, BATMAN.
HOW CAN YOU FREE YOURSELF-- WITHOUT LETTING YOUR PARTNER SLIP TO HIS DOOM?
YOUR VOICE-- I KNOW YOUR VOICE--!
I'M NOT SURPRISED. GOTHAM SOCIETY HAS MADE QUITE A FUSS OVER ME RECENTLY, AS DR. KARL HELLFERN.
BUT THAT IS AS NOTHING TO THE FUSS THEY'LL MAKE WHEN THEY HEAR THE PRICE I'LL DEMAND FOR THEIR SURVIVAL--
--AS DOCTOR DEATH!
IT SHOULD BE MOST INSTRUCTIVE.
PITY YOU WON'T LIVE TO SEE IT! GOODBYE, BATMAN!
HAHAHA!
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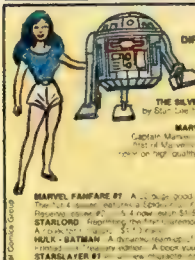

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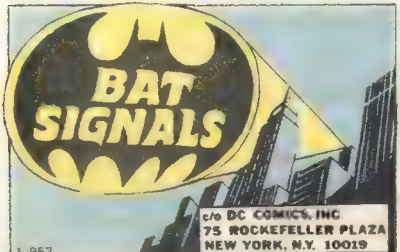

Dear Editor

I thoroughly enjoyed your story of Melvin Mole's attempted revenge on John Law. Your use of the names of Bill Elder and Dr. (should it not have been Harvey?) Kurtzmann, artist and author of the original Mole saga which appeared in *MAD*, made "A Man Called Mole" a doubly Entertaining Comic. Spa Fon!

Sincerely yours, Jeff Trexler RD 1 Box 137 Mertztown, PA 19539

* * * * *

Dear Dick,

I just had to write in with praise for "A Man Called Mole." The main attraction, of course, was the dazzling DC debut of Gene Colan. His dark, shadowy pencils greatly accentuated the mood of the story. This was not Colan's greatest artwork, but it still was very good, and I enjoyed every panel.

With such distinguished art, any old story would have done, but Thomas and Conway produced one of the best Batman stories I've read (interesting how Conway writes better with Thomas plots than he does on his own). Wayne mansion, the hidden stairway behind the grandfather clock, the original Batcave, and Bruce's evident concern for Dick's welfare (just like a father) combined to give a nice feeling of nostalgia (although I really wouldn't mind it if Bruce did move back to Wayne mansion). And I nearly fell off my chair when the Mole murdered two EC artists.

P.S. Do you write letter-cols only in the afternoon?

David Malone RR 2 Box 140, Sycamore, IL. 60178

Thanks for your kind words. We all got a kick out of doing this story. You see, we're all EC fans!

Bruce and Dick will be moving back to Wayne Mansion soon! This, along with other imminent changes in Batman/Bruce's world will, we're sure, keep you falling off your chair.

P.S. In our sunny editorial offices at DC it is always early afternoon, David!

* * * * *

Dear Editor

Huh Huh! You don't fool me! 'Batman Battles The Mole'? Huh Huh! Those names in the story: Elder, Kurtzmann, Gaines. Huh-Huh! Somewhere in a box high in the top of my closet is an old faded 10-cent copy of MAD, back when it was still a comic book. Huh-Huh! What a funny story they had, Mole-Man, drawn by Harvey Kurtzmann and Will Elder for publisher William Gaines. And you thought today's Batman readers are too young to remember, eh? Huh-Huh!

No Huh-Huh's for Gene Colan, though. His style is the most serious and least campy of all the Batman artists, and made an interesting contrast to the somewhat un-serious, campy story. Gerry and Roy are to be commended for doing so much to build interest in such a trite prison-escapee-seeks-revenge tale. Even the final battle, wherein Bats floods out the Mole, was an obvious solution, but one which the scripting gave no indication of beforehand. A nice old-fashioned piece of work, reminiscent of those 50's stories. Say, wasn't that when MAD did 'Mole-Man'? Huh-Huh!

Steve Thompson, 2706 Alabama, La Crescenta, CA 91214

Huh-Huh!!

To the Editor

BATMAN #340 is further proof that in assembling a comic book story, as in so much else in life, style *is* everything.

The origins of the new (and possibly improved) Mole and his patterned vengeance weren't the freshest concepts encountered lately. It *was* clever to reach back to an ancient WORLD'S FINEST issue, pluck an obscure villain from its pages, and transmute him literally into his namesake. The convenient mysterious mixture of chemicals, however, is a device somewhat long-of-tooth. Ditto is the single-minded homicidal bent of our villain.

Ah, but, well...style—that is, *how* one tells the tale—well, if it isn't everything, it's the sine non qua. Old yarns can be woven into fine fabrics by able hands.

Roy Thomas always lifts his assignments (presumably here he was working from Gerry Conway's plot.) with well-turned prose, and has a pleasing habit of relying on dialogue instead of swollen captions to expedite the plot. He also makes it a point to add a touch of spice to his scripts; in this case, we get some clever name-dropping, but more on that later.

Gene Colan tackled his first Batman tale in sure professional fashion, although, truth to tell, he's hardly a novice at mysterious, night-patrolling heroes. Colan works as hard when his characters are in repose as when they're embroiled in a fistfight, using different angles deftly. His layouts really do pull your eyes along, and I've always loved his loose panel arrangement when the action heats up.

The mound-in-the-street business, potentially a real laugh-getter, came off rather well, and was probably the issue's weirdest image. (Hey! Please keep the Mole away from New York City. The Big Apple's streets are rugged enough now, thank you!) The two murders were fine, florid depictions, and serve as prime examples of what I call the Steed-and-Emma Principle ("Bizarre killers render corpses bizarrely."). In the old AVENGERS tv series, you see, the raison d'etre of many a plot was a pattern of delightfully imaginative and colorful murders. (With THE AVENGERS, again, style *was* everything, etc., etc.) My favorite bit in #340, tho', was the Mole's nose for news on page 16. *That* explains the GLOBE's lousy circulation figures.

My one actual complaint concerns the tale's rather prosaic title. "A Man Called Mole!" has about as much menace to it as the copy in the Bubble Yum ad. I don't necessarily want something drenched in exclamation points and alliterative adjectives. It's just that a weird story needs a weird title.

In closing, let me acknowledge that name-dropping mentioned earlier. Elder? Gaines? Kurtzmann (sic)? Gentlemen, you must be MAD! Or at least E.C.-ly distracted. And I think that fellow Konigsberg and I have a mutual acquaintance, a certain Annie Hall.

Bat's all, folks!

P.S. I think this typewriter hates me.

Joe Pilla, 78 Morningside Ave, Yonkers, NY 10703

You have a way with words, Joe, but not too great picking out writing styles. Actually it was Gerry writing dialogue to a Roy Thomas plot. But you were close.

How 'bout "A Weird Man Called Mole!" (And you think your typewriter hates you...?)

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Re Batman #340.

I wasn't MAD when the Mole turned out to be Harrah instead of Melvin, but I was disappointed by Batman's inability to afford us the definition of that furshlugginer non-word, potzebie.

When and where will this maddening 30-year mystery be solved? Will it happen in a Batman/Captain Klutz tabloid?

Regarding Gene Colan drawing Batman, what could be more natural?

Yours truly, Jeffrey Lowndes, 809 Sunset St, Scranton, PA 18509

We'd really be pleased to solve that little mystery for you, chum, but there's only room enough to wish you, and all DC readers, a very Merry Christmas...and a thank you and good afternoon!

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GOTHAM CITY FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, JULY 6, 8:45 P.M....
...AND DO YOU, SELINA KYLE, TAKE THIS MAN, BRUCE WAYNE, TO BE YOUR LAWFULLY WEDDED HUSBAND?
I DO... OH, YES, I DO!
I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU MAN AND WIFE...YOU MAY KISS THE BRIDE.
DARLING..
BRUCE DEAREST... ~~choke~~ I-I'VE NEVER BEEN AS HAPPY AS I AM AT THIS MOMENT!
BRAVO! AT LAST!
CONGRATULATIONS, YOU TWO!
THOUGHT IT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN!
HOORAY!
YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN, BRUCE!
DON'T I KNOW IT!
AND I'M GOING TO EXERCISE AN ANCIENT PRIVILEDGE...
...AND KISS THE NEW BRIDE!
THAT IS IF BRUCE DOESN'T MI-- GOOD LORD!
SELINA, NO!
WHA--WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
W-WHY ARE YOU ALL STARING AT ME?
MY GOD! LOOK AT HER!
IT'S TRUE! IT'S TRUE! SHE IS A CAT!
DARLING, YOU PROMISED!
SHE'LL ALWAYS BE A CAT!
DISGUSTING!
KILL HER!
YES, KILL THE WRETCHED CREATURE!
NO! PLEASE!
MY GOD!
3

TERROR TRAIN!
NNOOOOOOOOOEEEEEEEEEEE!
POW!
POW!
BLAM!
..NO!!
=Gasp!=
GOTHAM CITY AMTRAK, FIFTY MILES DUE WEST, JULY 6, 8:45 P.M....
BRUCE JONES, STORY
TREVOR VON EEDEN & PABLO MARCOS, ART
TODD KLEIN, LETTERS
TOM ZIUKO COLORS
DICK GIORDANO, EDITOR

MISS? ER... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WHA? OH...YES, I ...EXCUSE ME. I-I HAD A DREAM...A NIGHTMARE ...I'M QUITE ALL RIGHT, THANK YOU...
=whew= HOW HIDEOUS! I'M SURE FREUD WOULD HAVE A FIELD DAY WITH THAT LITTLE DOOZY!

I NEED A DRINK! CLUB CAR'S THIS WAY, I THINK...
=SIGH= BRUCE...I CAN'T GET MY MIND OFF YOU, EVEN IN MY SLEEP...
PARDON ME..

YES? I--
YOU'LL PLEASE COME WITH ME, MISS KYLE...QUIETLY...
YOU PICKED A BAD TIME FOR THIS, BUSTER... I JUST LEFT THE MAN I LOVE AT A TRAIN STATION IN GOTHAM CITY--PERHAPS FOREVER--
--AND I'M NOT IN THE MOOD FOR THIS...
SAY, WHAT IS THIS? WHO ARE YOU?
NOW SUPPOSE WE FIND OUT JUST WHO YOU ARE...
...NOT IN THE MOOD AT ALL!
WAUGH!
...WHERE YOU SLUGH!G COME FROM!
...AND WHAT YOU WANT.
YOU CAN START WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE!
BUT WITHOUT WARNING, THE COMPARTMENT DOOR OPENS BEHIND SELINA...
WHA--

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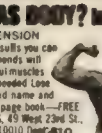

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AH, CATWOMAN, AT LAST! GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!
PLEASE...ER... HAVE A SEAT...
THE NAME'S =LUMPH!= SELINA KYLE...
YES, OF COURSE, FORGIVE ME, AND FORGIVE THE WAY I HAD YOU BROUGHT HERE. WE WEREN'T CERTAIN YOU'D...AH...COOPERATE
I'M DETECTIVE SERGEANT RICHARD STUART, MISS KYLE, I--
I'M CLEAN, SERGEANT.
EH? YES, OF COURSE. WE KNOW THAT. THIS ISN'T AN ARREST, MISS KYLE... IT'S MORE LIKE A... PROPOSAL.
HENRY?
HAVE A LOOK AT THIS, MISS KYLE...
THE VANISHING TRAINS CASE...YES, I'VE HEARD OF IT.
THERE'S BEEN A THIRD DISAPPEARANCE?
NOT YET. BUT AMTRAK 419 IS SCHEDULED TO RUN TOMORROW AT TWELVE NOON: DESTINATION, CHICAGO. WE WANT TO BE SURE IT DOESN'T SHARE THE SAME FATE AS 417 AND 418.
2nd PASSENGER TRAIN VANISHES! POLICE AND FBI BAFFLED!
AND YOU WANT MY HELP?
WE WANT THE BEST, CATWO--UH, MISS KYLE. YOU'RE THE BEST.
I'M FLATTERED.
SO WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
HERE'S A MAP OF THE AREA THE TRAINS COVER--OR ARE SUPPOSED TO COVER. AS YOU KNOW, THE LAST TWO VANISHED COMPLETELY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN GOTHAM AND CHICAGO, ILLINOIS...ONLY TO TURN UP FIVE DAYS LATER, INTACT, ALL PASSENGERS ACCOUNTED FOR...
WHAT DID THE PASSENGERS SAY?
VARYING REPORTS: SOME CLAIMED TO HAVE SEEN 'GHOSTS' OR 'DEMONS', MOST COMPLAINED OF MEMORY LOSS...
...BUT ALL AGREED THAT AT SOME POINT ALL THE LIGHTS WENT OUT, FOLLOWED BY A LENGTHY PERIOD OF BLACKNESS.
HMM. ANY TUNNELS ALONG THE WAY WHERE A TRAIN MIGHT BE SIDETRACKED?
ONLY ONE, BUT IT'S NOT LONG ENOUGH TO HIDE A THIRTY-SIX CAR TRAIN IN.
WE'VE CHECKED OVER EVERY INCH OF THAT TRACK, HAD GUARDS POSTED EVERY OTHER MILE. FRANKLY, WE'RE STUMPED!
PETE, THAT FILM READY?

HERE'S SOME HELICOPTER FOOTAGE OUR BOYS TOOK DURING THE 4:18'S LAST RUN.
"THERE'S THAT TUNNEL I MENTIONED. AS YOU CAN SEE, THE ENGINE IS WELL OUT OF THE OTHER SIDE BEFORE THE CABOOSE IS EVEN NEAR THE ENTRANCE..."
"NOW WATCH THIS AND GET READY FOR A JOLT!"
"I-IT'S FADING...FADING INTO THIN AIR!"
"LIM-M-M...AND IT'S NOT TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY!"
IT'S GONE! VANISHED! JUST LIKE A GHOST!
SO YOU SEE WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, MISS KYLE. HALF MY STAFF REALLY BELIEVES IT IS A SUPERNATURAL OCCURRENCE!
YET THE TRAIN ALWAYS REAPPEARS SEVERAL DAYS LATER AT THE CHICAGO STATION, PASSENGERS AND THEIR MONEY INTACT...
EXACTLY. DOESN'T SOUND LIKE FOUL PLAY, DOES IT?
SIGH I DUNNO... MAYBE WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE IS SOME KIND OF BERMUDA TRIANGLE THING...
OR MAYBE THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT YOU TO THINK--WHOEVER 'THEY' ARE...
LET'S ASSUME FOR A MOMENT THAT IT IS A CRIMINAL PLOT OF SOME KIND... WHY WOULD THEY WANT TO MAKE A TRAIN 'DISAPPEAR' FOR A FEW DAYS WITHOUT STEALING ANYTHING FROM IT?
SNIDE!
DRUGS! THEY'RE TRANSPORTING DRUGS INTO CHICAGO!
WE THOUGHT OF THAT.
BOTH THE 4:17 AND THE 4:18 WERE THOROUGHLY CHECKED IN THE CHICAGO STATION--THEY'RE CLEAN.

OKAY, SERGEANT. I'LL TAKE YOUR CASE! I'LL GET MY COSTUME OUT OF MOTHBALLS!
GREAT! HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?
GET ME RECORDS OF ALL THREE TRAINS DATING BACK TO THE DAY THEY WERE BUILT. AND AFTER THAT--
--GET ME A TICKET ON BOARD THE 419!
TIME: 2:25 P.M.
PLACE: AMTRAK RAILROAD CAR FIFTY MILES OUTSIDE OF GOTHAM.
TRAIN: THE 419.
SO FAR, SO QUIET...
ACCORDING TO THESE BLUEPRINTS AND DATA THAT DETECTIVE STUART GAVE ME, SOME OF THESE CARS WERE BUILT DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND WERE REFURBISHED FOR PRESENT DAY USE BY AMTRAK.
9
HERE COMES THAT TUNNEL STUART SHOWED ME IN THE MOVIE...
THE LAST TRAIN DISAPPEARED SHORTLY AFTER EMERGING FROM THE OTHER SIDE.
WOW! BLACK AS PITCH IN HERE! CAN'T SEE MY HAND BEFORE MY--
HEY! SHOULDN'T I BE SEEING THE TUNNEL EXIT BY NOW?
SOMETHING SCREWY GOING ON HERE...

WHAT IN BLAZES! A GRAVEYARD! WE'RE MOVING THROUGH A GRAVEYARD!
HAHAHAHAHA
EEEEEE
GHOSTS! MOMMY, I'M SCARED!
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
WHAT TH--
DIDN'T ANYONE EVER TELL YOU IT ISN'T POLITE TO FRIGHTEN CHILDREN-- OOF!
MY HAND WENT RIGHT THROUGH HIM!
HA HA HA HA
WELCOME ABOARD THE PHANTOM EXPRESS, CATWOMAN! IT'S A SHAME...
THAT VOICE ...FAMILIAR SOME-HOW...
...SO SOON!
...YOU HAVE TO LEAVE US...
AGH!
WEAKNESS SEEPING INTO MY VEINS... NO STRENGTH...C-CAN'T FIGHT IT...
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
NEXT: IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD!
7

ANOTHER DYNAMITE COMIC FROM THE HOUSE OF DARING CONCEPTS!

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from

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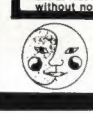

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